

Mars Hill

poems and
illustrations
by
Al Rosati

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New York
2001



Antiope

de Raut.

Brigge's Coathanger

Now for times of visitation, with a girl under the
dove, the semite hills through the window shine.

Another impulse. You were as a pet, kind of cute
and cuddly, much beloved. Now: ritual grab-ass
with the Holy Ghost, and she went pumping down
the hall, and all mercury, suddenly, turned red.

Off the rack - a 42-long already frayed in due course.
Move over, M. Laurids, your wasn't so much either.
Why can't we sit all day in a bar, like Jack, waiting
for many and other Martians?

The carnivores fresh from the feast will loll and
doze in a box at the opera, may retire with the
tall brunette, third from the left. Remember her?

I remember a photograph of Padre Pio listening, full
of reverence, to Beniamino Gigli.

Only a lack of strain hints at voiding hard contracts,
Allows its wan slack push, holds it aloof.
Only that. Pairs of girls, party of first parts,
In front of Sak's, Lord & Taylor, still skins it all
With soft unknowing looks. Drawn up a bland and sorry
Imitation of common things, dogs at curbs, plants
In windows, trucks with blank signs stand to ratify
Nothing official, nor, again, void so common a bond.
Only not for just now two girls in a room
With wrists and throats that fix to nothing,
Nor four infants mummifying on the floor, nor six satyrs
Fifty floors up out of sight, howling, stuck in mortar.

Far aims, oblivious, of this want pair with
Far aims, oblivious, of that want, back to firsts in
Junior High. It signs a tough and duly sworn aristocracy
Drawn up by strict mills of curious gods
That brooks no unofficial split in rank.

At 4 AM,

Just out of too familiar clasps, warm,
A common man in garish pants stood watching rats
Do guilty official things to downtown tracks,
Spark bursts from uptown third rails. Nails and hair
Still grow on skin void now and for all;
Plain sight still stands to win that crowd of known
Inward strain, toiling from aching arms,
Void, who riot down bloody sinks of anatomical pacts.

Such things that solitary knows who will pass
An hour or two dabbling with parts from small girls
Of past bargains, which hang on burning light bulbs
For warmth.

Some Deprived Haul Loads From The Original Placenta

1.

He speaks clouds, stones, cotton, dry leaves. Fingers swell with no pain though they can still sense a lock of hair they hold. And behind the eyelids - formations of tiny red seeds. An infant's eye is tough, it can bear a large visitor and a grammar spoken by one. A unique vocabulary: in all of history past or to come there is no such tongue. His stones drop. They are silent dwarfs dreaming of malignant plots. Flowers (those mercenaries in Uganda) babble for a short time only before lapsing into a murmur. Gentlemen, will you charge your glasses? I give you the King. I give you the Queen.

2.

A boney nest out of late afternoon and city wrens close in with elaborate maneuvers, their eyes are all pupil. Damn damn damn Butterfield Butterfield. The grey-brown of their shoulders sinks clean through to the throat. On a Civil War bugal. A graceful, elegant descent, down with the puff of a dandelion, settled, finally. Don't walk. Don't walk on the white beards rising from the streets - they will stare you down every time if you relax for an instant. Combat under your shoes i.e. alligators in the sewers. And a cat with a bird in its mouth.

3.

Here then is the threat of halls: that the unnatural sheen of their floors still revolves from a brush with day's ignorant touch. Routes for the unwary which may open, to everyone's astonishment, onto a gaudy arcade full of easy menace. Unpeopled. Though the atmosphere is quick with presence. Is there a reason for the absence of mirrors? But comes some voices from nearby and sounds of a discrete party going on. So geometry turns cozy after all. You will meet a janitor, sweeping, who knows your name in a casual way. Everything will be alright.

Mars Hill

*among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite and a
woman named Damaris*

Acts of the Apostles, XVII:34

1.

Poor angel in their just assault.
It depends on the biting of nails.
Fingernails. And the mark of her foot,
so gentle an invention.

How trinkets, lower odors, replace the compass
computation - north south east
and west boxing
of the ears which thou bringest
strange things to our

Not this way not that way

How three times the cock crew.
How three times I took a piss
and feigned indifference
feigned a splendor that was not mine.
I am sick with naming of her angels.

We will hear thee again on this matter.

2.

Notable among whom was Small Paul, frying in his skin.
Hence the fingernails. And an eye for conspirators.
Conspirittu.

Your foot marked me. I lie celibate beyond the hem of your
gown, I, marked by your foot which names me.

By the Oracles and the Guide she led me to which I am
filled with the naming of her angels.

Conspiracies to which she was privy - we would gather at
the hill and conspire before they brought him over.
I gave her trinkets when she was a girl, sweets from Persia,
a puppy. Before they brought him over for a hearing.

O my beloved

His fingernails made a map of us.

3.

Splendor is a kick in the ass. The notables among us
drew from the well but were not dry enough.

Solicit you somebody else for these sounds are not mine.

I hear one word but spell another.

Four rounds have drawn them and still the well is not dry.

The problem with you is she is a make-believe.

Sick with the naming of angels. Not this way not that way
north is the pagan land south is the sea east is
the turning of keys west is her foot, palatial mansions
here there is a break in the land there there is a stream
run dry further, its source further still, a circle
still further still, Ganymede bearing a cup an eagle

Remnants From a False Exhibition

These are the sutures, black and brown. This the
very needle that sewed the flesh. Notice the
'20s look.

There is the rose thrown by a woman in 1939. Observe
it is still moist. Her rose stays fresh. Her rose
stays fresh. Her rose stays fresh.

Here is a photo of a man with his feet in the air.
Here is one of a man on his back.
Here is another of a man being carried away. Notice
his bearers, running, their mouths open.

Love Song 8

By her lips
the air tangible with serpents
knits itself textures of their lengths
in pulsing fabric settling like a net.

What colors?
What iridescent colors stain
the mirror of their scales wherein
reflect images of myself?

By what right, these lips?
In whose name?



**To The Lower Right Half of Caravaggio's
"Seven Works of Mercy"**

Now iron's frozen bars permit
 the simmering breast;
a rustle of gown mustering
 fragrance of herbs from moistening
 armpit, dampness between the breasts,
deliver a whisper of wings to Leda's ear,
the belly turned bark for Apollo's fingers,
and the last of ice
 thin as a whispered prayer
cracks underfoot to stir the musk
 of last year's rot.

The nipple's rigid rise under
 his cracked lips, tug
and draw from toothless gums
 suffers the bristle whiskers' scratch
 and prick and yields warm metallic
rain caressing Danae's moistening hair,
Io drawn to the damp god-scented mist,
and a quick spurt of milk
 rouses restless thunder
from turbulent herds, bellowing
 deep underground.

Catatonic Exhibited to Students

Silent, he accuses walls. His smile,
his hands like carved soap,
charge doors and windows with complicity.
His eyes finger us calmly.

'What year is it?' asks the Ph.D.
We shift our chairs so we can see.

Under the heavy overcoat his slight
form gives evidence against
the summer day, debates with sunlight,
rebutts some distant birds.

'What year is it?' asks the Ph.D.
We shift our chairs so we can see.

The letter of his law by which his
woman's skin passes judgment
admits no exception.
He convicts us.

'What year is it?' asks the Ph.D.
We shift out chairs so we can see.

Jean-Auguste-Dominique and Me

Her Ingres eyes
pencil point
a placid web
resolving outlines
which descend
to one hand
palm up
In her lap
the other suspended
free beyond
an arm
of the chair.

Knockings on the Doors of Subway Cars Moving At High Speed Between Stops

Was it only the black woman in a cardboard box
across from the Museum of Modern Art?

Or the sea captain approaching her with two
seven foot lengths of curved aluminum tubing?

Or black and white hairs on a sixty year old
chest under the delicate gold chain?

Pappy Yokum and I meeting regularly on the corner
of Madison Ave and 50th st - his outer layer of
many pants showing snake skin?

But no. Consider the rhyming of eyes along the
car, the yellow line on the platform, left behind.

Ladies, look to your chastity in the days of
our youth. And who among us will deny it?
Not me.

Nothing, in the above, was invented. Not even the title.

Pre-Opera Dinner at Burgerking

*Ed elli a me: "Questo misero modo
tegnon l'anime triste di coloro
che visser sanza 'nfamia e sanza lodo."
Inferno, III, 34-36*

Too many wolves to wade among the chairs
of those at pasture by a stagnant pond.
Snapping at dragonflies. Annoyed, the eyes
of a blond, snared in second thoughts, regard
the hag mumbling her Whopper and fries.
Fishhooks in a scavenger truce which conned
the mercy out of their prayers.

To many watering wolves. Yet just beyond
reach the last of the sun bursts into flares
on windows across the street and dies
in a pastoral mood. Was I deceived
believing the curtain about to rise,
the chorus in the wings, the conductor on the stairs,
and she in her dressing room just received
the final call? But it was only bad

pennies in my pocket, the soft and woolen airs
of wolves. The notion that we've been had
by something cozy yet unconceived.

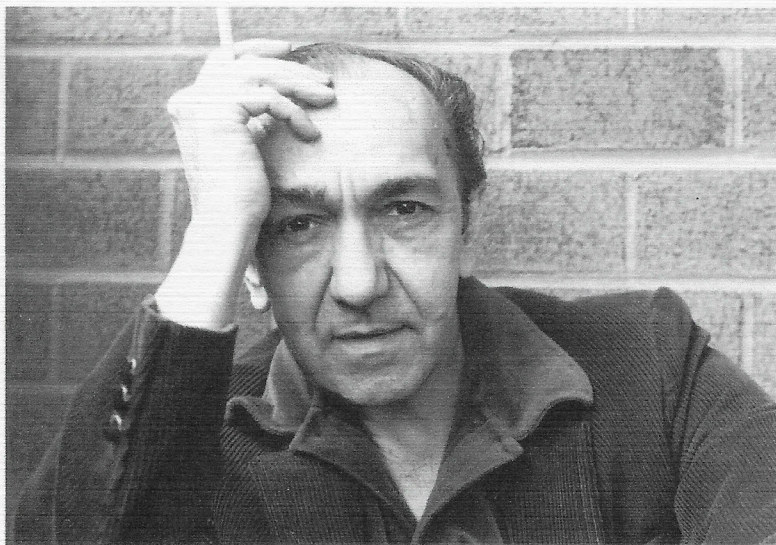
A Small Crowd Gathers In The Subway

The bench supports his seated corpse as though
it were intended for such use: its wood
turns solemn, dignified. A cap pulled low
conceals his aged eyes from which manhood

departed just now exhausted with shame
for his rags, impatient with discontent.
Without asking for sympathy he came.
Without disturbing a finger he went.







Alfonso Rosati (1932-2000)

Al Rosati wrote this bio for an unpublished poetry anthology:

"Al Rosati comes out of New York State's Niagara Frontier and earns his living in the demonic world of computers. His work has appeared in *Elm Leaves*, *Apocalypse Review*, *Broadside*, *Cela Suffi*, *Poetry Northeast*, and has been translated into Italian for *Dei Principi* of Rome. When his hour has come he will regret leaving Beethoven, the six Bach cello suites, Jack Daniels bourbon, Tatiana Troyanos, and Jorge Luis Borges. After any opera performance he reviews the audience. He defines poetry as : po-et-ry (po'it-ri), n. (ME & OFr. poetrie; ML Poetria <L. poeta, a poet <Gr. poiesis <Poiein, to make), graffiti on the far walls of being."